I PHILOSOPHY OF CONSTRUCTION

A. Well to do Crafters

1. Well to do crafters, who have the ability to pay for fine workmanship, may buy only the finest articles made of silver and gold.

a. Following the belief in the law of contagion, they will set aside their tools and use them solely for their magical work.

(1) Many have velvet or silk covers made for the tools which will keep them nice and shiny with a minimum of polishing.

B. Garden Variety Kitchen Witches

1. These people place more value on making their own tools, even if they are not the prettiest to look at.

a. They feel the tools become charged with their will as they are formed by their minds and hands.

(1) Many times the tools will do double duty in the kitchen and it takes someone who knows how the tools are used to figure out that they are magical.

(a) This necessitates that the equipment be reconsecrated each time they are to be used for magic ritual.

(b) A direct benefit of this is that you get lots of practice in consecrating tools. And you inject a certain amount of magic into your everyday life.

I. NAMES AND THE USES OF THE VARIOUS TOOLS

A. Clothing

1. The Ceremonial Robe

a. Most traditions adopt a robe of a particular color.

(1) This serves the same purpose of going skyclad, in that it makes everyone more or less equal.

(a) Colors tend toward symbolizing purity (white) identifying with nature (green) or camouflage for outdoor work (brown or black).

b. The robe is usually hooded for outdoor use but many crafters who only work inside use robes of a lightweight material with no hood.

(1) The robe is supposed to be made of a natural fiber such as cotton and sewn by the owners own hand.

(a) Some witches will say a blessing over each stitch which helps them concentrate their magical will on the purpose of the robe as they are making it.

(b) Having someone who is good at sewing or using a sewing machine to make the robe is not unknown, although rigid purists would probably turn their noses up at the idea.

c. To ensure that the robe retains its ability to trigger subliminal responses it is only worn for ritual purposes and usually stored in a chest set aside for ritual equipment when not being used.

(1) Many traditions adopt a specific incense with a distinct aroma for their ritual work and the robe absorbs the scent.

(a) The scent can be another subliminal trigger.

2. The Cingulum or Cord.

a. This is a cord, usually braided, which is worn about the waist and tied in a simple knot.

(1) The cingulum symbolized the witchs' bond to the Goddess and is used in knot magic and binding rituals.

(a) It is usually made of a natural fiber such as cotton, silk or wool.

(b) Some traditions favor one color for all members (such as red) while other traditions prefer a different color for each degree.

(c) When there are different colors for each degree the highest achieved is worn or all cords earned are worn braided together.

(d) The length is traditionally tied to laying out a typical circle with a nine foot diameter. Some cords are 9 feet long and others are a little longer than 4 1/2 feet long.

(e) To lay out a nine foot diameter circle with the shorter cord the witch would mark the center of the circle with a stick or athalme and tie one end of the cord to it. She would then use the other end to measure out the circumference of the circle by walking around it with the cord held taut.

3. The Cloak

a. This is a large loose fitting cloak or cape of heavy material with a hood.

(1) The color is usually black, dark blue or grey.

(a) This is a totally functional piece of equipment. It was worn as a witch travelled to the Covenmeet. It allowed her to blend into the shadows of the night.

(b) Having the ability to disappear into the surrounding shadows of a forest at night while wearing this cloak led to the belief that witches had the ability to turn invisible.

(c) As night wore into dawn, the cloak was worn to keep away the chill of morning on the return trip. Sometimes a lining of a common color such as brown was sown into the cloak so that it could be worn inside out on the return during daylight.

B. Jewelry

1. The Necklace

a. Almost all statues of the Goddess from ancient times depict Her as wearing a necklace.

(1) For this reason a modern female witch may wear a necklace as a sign of her attachment to the Goddess.

(a) The necklace is made of a natural substance such as a strand of amber beads alternating with beads of jet, or seashells.

(b) A necklace made of acorns incorporates the connection with the Goddess, and the God, whose tree is the oak and the acorn is an ancient symbol of fertility.

(c) Necklaces with symbols that make the witch feel 'witchy' are very common and they are usually fashioned of silver which is the Lady's metal.

(2) In most traditions the male witch is not required to wear a necklace, but when he chooses to it might be silver in identification with the Goddess.

(a) Or gold in identification with the God. Designs could be traditional, like a torc or pentagram or anything else that appeals to him.

2. The Bracelet

a. Some traditions use bracelets as magical amulets and female witches, especially high priestesses, will wear copper bracelets which help them to identify with the solar aspects of the Goddess or the God.

3. The Ring

a. I have no knowledge of any tradition that requires its members to wear a particular ring.

(1) Most witches have a favorite 'magic' ring that they like to wear during rituals.

(a) Most magical texts contain numerous instructions on how to construct and decorate magical rings to bind demons, cloud minds of people around you, and turn you invisible.

(b) The drawback to these is that you must learn to design and cast your own jewelry. Not to mention getting the gold and other precious metals and stones required in the formulas.

4. The Garter

a. Most properly an article of clothing, the garter has come to be used as a badge of office rather than a necessity for holding up stockings.

(1) There is a cave painting from the paleolithic era showing a male shaman, dressed in his robes and surrounded by his tribe, as they perform a magical ritual and, while his legs are bare, a garter is very plainly shown around each thigh.

(2) The garter may have been used as a talisman at one time, as noted above, but today it is used to designate status in the Pagan community.

(a) A silver buckle is added to the garter when ever a Priestess leaves the mother coven. The High Priestess of the mother coven may then add a buckle to her garter to symbolize this hiving off of a new coven.

(3) There is a story about a ball that King Edward the Third of England gave. During this ball the dancing apparently got pretty wild and one of the Lady's of the Court lost her Garter.

(a) The King picked it up and tied it on his own leg and spoke the words "Shame to him who thinks ill of it."

(b) This was the basis for the Order of the Garter, which is perhaps the oldest Order of Knighthood in Britain. The Kings words became the motto of the Order;
"Hont soit qui mal y pense."

5. The Moon Crown

a. Ancient statues of Diana show her with a band about her head and a crescent moon affixed to it across her forehead, to show her dominion over the moon which is her celestial sphere.

(1) High Priestess are crowned with a Moon Crown during the invocation of the Goddess. This serves as a reminder that she speaks for the Goddess and acknowledges the High Priestesses connection with Her.

6. The Horned Helmet

a. The God is a Horned God, and when He is invoked into the High Priest during ritual the Priest is crowned with the Horned Helmet, for essentially the same reasons.

(1) Horns were the original form that crowns took as they represented the virility of the leader of the tribe which was important to its survival.

(a) The words for 'horns' and 'crown' were the same in Hebrew, and when Michaelangelo did his research for his statue of Moses he was unaware of this and that is why his statue shows Moses with horns.

(2) Once tribal society gave way to urban society crowns were fashioned in the shape of buildings, with a defensive wall around them.

(3) Crowns did not start to resemble the religious crowns of the Catholic Church, with its attendant orbs and crosses, until the false Donation of Constantine was created in 754 CE.

(a) Before this, a King was chosen by his people and recognized by the Church. After the "Donation of Constantine" the Bishop of Rome was recognized as the "Vicar of Christ" and vested with the power to create Kings and Emperors.

(b) It is from the "Donation of Constantine" that the subsequent power of the Vatican in secular affairs ultimately derives.

C. Simples

1. Candles

a. Candles are used for their light and their flame as the symbol of the highest manifestation of ether on the material plane.

(1) Most altar setups use two candles for polarity

(a) They can both be white or one white and the other red or black.

(2) Some altar setups use a single white candle called the Maiden's Candle.

(a) This is the first lit and all other candles, as well as the incense used, are lit from this candle.

(b) The Maiden Candle is usually kept in a holder that allows it to be picked up and moved about the circle without danger of spilling hot wax.

(c) It can be used as the symbol of fire when purifying the circle and as a portable light as needed.

(3) Most traditions use candles to mark the four quarters of the circle.

(a) Colored candles to match the Elements they represent are sometimes used instead of the traditional white.

(b) Some practical-minded witches, with the wherewithal to do so, use polynesian kerosene powered torches for their outdoor circles at the four quarters.

2. Incense

a. Most traditions adopt a particular scent that becomes a subliminal trigger for them.

(1) Just about any incense will do, as long as it is pleasant and does not produce too much smoke.

(a) Typical incenses are Frankincense and Myrrh combinations and Sandlewood.

(2) In older times, some of the incenses were compounded using mildly hallucinogenic plants, but todays incenses are used mostly to scent the air.

(a) Although I have seen incenses used that were also prepared so as to drive away night insects.

3. Annointing Oils

a. Used in annointings and blessings.

(1) It can be as simple as a good quality olive oil or as complex as a fine mixture of rare essence oils.

(a) One advantage of working skyclad is that you don't collect oil splotches on your robe from repeated annointings.

(b) Of course, you can always remove your robe for the annointings, but then it is up to personal and group discretion.

D. Working Tools

1. Athame (ath-ay-me) or Athalme (ah-thal-may)

a. This is the witches basic working tool

(1) It is a steel bladed knife, usually with an edge on both sides, and a black handle.

(a) Some old-time ones were made of chipped flint with the handle made of twine or a small rope made from plants, which was then died black with berry juice.

(b) Some modern ones have a bone handle or a deer hoof for a handle.

b. The Athame is a physical symbol of the witch's magical will.

(1) A knife was probably the first efficient cutting tool developed by humans with which they could kill their game.

(a) Just as the dog was the first wild animal that mankind domesticated, the knife was the first truly human piece of technology.

(b) It is used in the circle as a symbol of authority and a badge of faith.

(c) Because the steel was forged in fire, the athame is typically ascribed to resonate with the element of Fire.

(d) Although there are traditions that assign it to the element of Air.

2. The Sword

a. More popular with Ceremonial Magicians, the sword can be seen as a large version of the athame or the athame can be viewed as a small version of the sword.

(1) Most covens possess only one sword which is community property. It is rare that an individual witch will own their own sword.

(a) In earlier times, everyone was expected to own a knife, it and the spoon were the main eating utensils before the fork was developed. Only people of the nobility or of high rank were allowed to carry a sword because it was considered a weapon of aggression.

(2) As with the athame, the element of the sword is thought to be Fire.

b. The sword, if used, can be used to cast the circle and during the initiation rituals.

(1) Some people like to use a sword instead of an athame but I find it gets crowded enough with thirteen people jammed into a nine foot diameter circle, without having someone swinging a sword this way and that.

3. The Boleen or Boline

a. This is the witches white handled knife, used for fashioning other tools.

(1) You may think of it as a magical pocketknife, although it is not usually a folding knife.

(a) With the large amount of tools available today, ranging from simple hand-tools to Dremel mini powered tools, it is not very common to see a boleen in use today.

4. The Kerfan

a. This is the traditional golden sickle, which the Druids were fond of using to cut mistletoe.

(1) Not many traditions use a Kerfan today, but those with a Druidic leaning might favor them.

5. The Rod or Riding Pole (Broomstick)

a. The Rod served many purposes in the olden times.

(1) It was a walking stick in days when everything was not paved over with concrete.

(a) And what with the desire to escape the city for rituals, it still does a pretty good job.

(2) It usually represented a phallus and the end that was not touching the ground was carved to enhance this effect.

(a) The practice of using it as a riding pole during fertility rituals is self-explanatory.

(b) During the dances, the witches would leap amongst the grain in the fields astride their 'broomsticks' to show how high they wanted the crops to grow. This led to the belief that witches fly on their broomsticks.

(3) In addition to camouflaging the pole so as not to offend outsiders, tying bunches of broom plants to the end of the Rod provided a practical tool for sweeping the twigs and leaves from around the area that the witch wished for her circle.

(a) As a side note, the people who did not understand the purpose of the Rod, but had seen it used in dances, turned it around so that the 'broom' part was going away, behind the witch, as she rode it in their illus- trations.

b. Traditionally, the Rod was cut from a tree that was sacred to the Goddess or the God.

(1) Practically any good hardwood will serve.

6. The Magic Wand

a. Like the Riding Pole, the magic wand is really a phallus, which serves as the symbol of the virility of its wielder.

(1) It is also traditionally cut from a tree which is sacred to the Goddess or God.

(a) The Key of Solomon says that the wand should be cut from a hazel or nut tree, and that the tree should be virgin (no more than one years growth.)

(b) The wand is to be cut with a single stroke on the day of Mercury at sunrise.

(c) Some traditions require that it be cut using a golden sickle (kerfan).

b. The traditional length is from the tip of the middle finger of the right hand to the tip of the elbow.

(1) This made it easier to hide in a robes sleeve.

c. The wand is considered a tool of persuasion rather than command, and in most traditions is assigned the Element Air.

(1) Although, in those traditions that assign Air to the athame and Sword, the element Fire is assigned to the Riding Pole and the Wand.

7. The Pentacle

a. In magic, a pentacle is a mandalla or focal point for the work it encompasses.

(1) Most pentacles were made of a maleable material, such as wax or cast in the metal corresponding to the astronomical planet that the Magician was evoking in his/her works.

b. In most traditions of the craft, the pentacle is an Earth pentacle incorporating the symbols that are meaningful to the members of the tradition.

(1) It is the centerpiece of the altar, on which objects are consecrated; the water and salt bowls are placed upon it for blessing.

c. Some traditions call it a Moon Pentacle, and the symbols, while basically the same, are carved into a silver disc.

(1) The idea being that consecration and blessing is performed in direct contact with the Goddess.

(a) The silver metal of the pentacle providing the link necessary for contagion.

d. When the pentacle is an Earth pentacle, it is usually made of

a metal such as copper.

(1) It is normally round, and 5-6 inches in diameter.

8. The Scourge

a. Typically, a whip made of a handle of nutwood and eight tails of cords with five knots tied in each tail.

(1) The scourge has two uses.

(a) Symbolic, a sign of power and domination.

(b) And for gentle, monotonous, semi-hypnotic application to affect the blood circulation as an aid to 'gaining the Sight.'

9. The Cauldron

a. The cauldron was one of the most useful items in the kitchens.

(1) It was essential for cooking, brewing, processing many kinds of food and medicines, treating hides, washing, dyeing, making household items like soap and candles, and carrying water or fire.

(a) It's small wonder that the broom and cauldron became the two most widely recognized symbols of a woman's dominion over domestic matters as represented by hearth and home.

b. The cauldron is an essential symbol of the Craft and embodies sacred truths that reflect the witch's world view.

(1) Seen as a 'cooking pot' the cauldron was endlessly churning, turning, a boiling matrix, a soup of elemental raw materials in the cosmic womb.

(a) The cauldron represents the stuff of creation, the Mother's eternal flux.

(b) The cauldron symbolizes creation, that occurs not just once as in some other religions, but constantly, as long as the universe lasts.

(2) But the cauldron was not only a symbol for the womb of the Mother. It was also a symbol of abundance.

(a) Just a Nature overproduces to assure the survival of a species, the cauldron is seen as an endless source of nourishment for the followers of the Goddess.

(b) The Cauldron of Danu kept by the Dagda.

(3) The cauldron was also seen as the source of wisdom, inspiration, understanding and magic.

(a) Both Western and Eastern myths insisted that the aspiring Father God was obliged to steal his power and/or wisdom from some version of the Mother's vessel.

(b) Odin managed to drink the Wise Blood from the three cauldrons in the womb of Earth (Erda), by tricking the 'giantess' who was tending them, and taking the sacred substance when she wasn't looking. He was also able to illegally acquire knowledge of reading and writing the runes, mastery of magic, shape-shifting ability, and understanding of cosmic matters which were formerly the Goddess's exclusive property.

(c) In India, the sky god Indra also stole Wise Blood, from Triple Kali's three cauldrons.

(d) The Welsh stories of the Tale of Gwion Bach, and the Tale of Taliesin present Cerridwen as a witch who brews up a potion in her cauldron to give her son magical abilities. The boy she has tending the fire for a year and a day gets splattered and burned on the hand by the brew and sticks his fingers into his mouth. He then goes through some difficult times as he shape-changes to escape the pursuing Cerridwen, until finally she catches and consumes him, and nine moths later gives birth to Taliesin.

(4) A worldwide cycle of myths reveals that the cauldron was also a symbol of rebirth.

(a) Mycenaean Demeter made a god of the sacri- ficial victim Pelops by resurrecting him from her magic cauldron.

(b) This sort of magic was still attributed to the female Trinity of the Fates in the late Roman Empire.

(c) Irish Celtic mythology speaks of a cauldron owned by Bran which would restore dead warriors to life.

(d) Welsh mythology also has a similar cauldron known as the Black Cauldron.

(5) All over Britain, both Pagans and Christians alike continued to utilize the ancient holy wells and springs, especially those in the earth-womb caves, or those whose waters bubbled and boiled like seething cauldrons.

(a) This was because their Pagan ancestors regarded such places as healing shrines. The ancient peoples thought them earthly manifestations of the cosmic womb, where all life could be endlessly regenerated.

c. Traditionally the cauldron is made of cast copper or cast iron, with a bail so that it could be suspended over a fire on a tripod, and had three feet or legs in remem- brance of the Triple Goddess whose womb it represents.

(1) It is not unusual today to see a fire kindled inside of a cauldron in deference to fire safety.

E. Altar Equipment

1. The Altar

a. Usually a table or some other handy item, which is large enough to hold all the necessary equipment and flat enough to keep everything from rolling off.

(1) Some traditions like to use a square or cube which represents the material world, while others insist that it be round like the circle.

(a) Square and rectangular shapes are also popular since they are more common within the average home.

(b) As with so many other things, going with what you've got and feel comfortable with, works just fine.

b. Some traditions feel that the altar top should be made of slate or some other stone, while others prefer the light weight of wood.

(1) If it is a permanent altar outside you might just want to make it all out of stone and cement.

c. Something that is often overlooked is that the altar should be tall enough not to give you a backache as you work over it.

d. Some people like to use different colored table runners or cloths to cover the altar, while others prefer a 'bare' altar top.

(1) Personally, I prefer runners and cloths that are color coordinated for the season and I am not above placing flowers and fruits of the season on the altar.

2. Candles

a. There should be two candles on the altar for polarity.

(1) Depending on your orientation, you will want to use either silver candlestick holders or gold, copper or some other solar metal.

(2) The candles represent the polarity of the Goddess and the God.

(a) They should be either both white or one white and the other red or black. White is for purity and black is for the shadow. Red can be substituted for black if black has too many negative connotations for you, since red represents the love and passion of the blood.

(b) It has been known for people to use red and green candles, but I prefer to use white on the altar and colored candles for the four Quarters of the circle.

3. Censer or Bowl of Incense

a. A censer can be as elaborate as those that the Catholic Church employs or as practical as a small hanging pot from the garden shed that has some sand in it to keep the incense from burning the altar.

(1) Incense burners from curio shops are handy, but you should be able to either pick them up or place sticks of incense in them.

(a) I prefer to use incense burners that have three legs in accordance with the tradition associated wit the cauldron.

4. The Bell

a. The Bell is used to draw the Elementals, particularly the Sylphs, to your rituals.

(1) Some people prefer bells with clappers while others like bells that must be struck.

5. The Pentacle

a. Although we have already spoken of the Pentacle, it is usually thought of as a piece of altar equipment, and so it is mentioned it here.

6. Small Cauldron or Bowl of Water

a. It should be half-filled with spring water

(1) Typically, it is painted black on the inside if it is to be used for scrying.

7. Vessel of Salt

a. Simply a bowl of salt to represent Earth.

8. Chalice or Drinking Horn

a. This is the cup from which you will drink a toast to the Lady and Her Lord.

(1) It is a smaller version of the cauldron with all the attendant symbolism.

(a) The Arthurian legends speak of the quest for the Holy Grail, which was much older than Christianity.

(b) One of the Mysteries attached to the Grail was that the King and the land were one. If the king were to grow old and frail without passing his kingdom along to a younger, more virile successor, the land would wither and die.

(2) A major portion of any ritual involves the symbolic mating of the Athame and Chalice, in recognition of the life forces of the God and Goddess.

(a) While most traditions have the Priest wielding the Athame and inserting it into the womb-chalice which is held by the Priestess, I feel it is more meaningful to have the Priest and Priestess exchange symbols and enact the rite as though they were on the Astral Plane.

9. Statuary or Symbols

a. Some traditions use statuary of the Goddess and/or the God as focal points for concentration.

(1) We do not worship the statues as embodiments of the Goddess and the God, though they might take on the properties of being a talismanic link between us and them.

(a) We do not worship the statues. Our goal is to invoke the Goddess and the God into our hearts and minds, not into inert art.

b. Other traditions, still afraid of being accused of being idolaters, will use symbols of the Goddess/God instead

(1) Moonstones and other stones with holes naturally worn into them are sacred to the Goddess.

(a) Sometimes stones will be carved with occult markings, of which only local initiates know the meanings. These are often called 'mason marks' by those who do not understand the meaning of the marks.

10. The Candle Snuffer

a. While technically not a tool of ritual, this is a carryover from Ceremonial Magic.

(1) In Ceremonial Magic, where the world is seen as a battleground between good and evil, the light of a candle represents the purity of the Good, while darkness is seen as the evil of the Bad.

(a) To allow the pure flame of a candle to be blown out supposedly weakens the effect of the flame, so Ceremonial Magicians always snuff out the candle to show that they did so by an act of will and not as a victory of the Bad over the Good.

b. It can be made of silver or brass, depending on your preference.

I. SYMBOLS USED TO CARICATURIZE WITCHES

A. Clothing

1. Each article of clothing associated with the witch has a long and chequered history.

a. By the 17th century most witches were busy hiding while the witch craze ran rampant across most of Europe.

(1) The majority of stereotypical clothing supposedly worn by a witch was modeled on the style of clothing which was just going out of style as the craze was gaining momentum.

(a) Not surprisingly, the older women who were tortured into confessing that they were witches, tended to favor the mode of dress which was going out of fashion.

2. The typical image of a witch shows a woman wearing a cone shaped hat, wrapped in a cape with a girdle around her waist, gloves in hand, and wearing long toed shoes.

a. We shall see that all these items were perfectly normal items of clothing, which would not raise an eyebrow, unless the observer had a twisted mind in the first place.

(1) The conical hat-

(a) These types of hats have been in fashion from time to time, with and without a brim, and they are always condemned as being diabolical because they led people to have carnal thoughts when they realize the phallic symbolism of the hat.

(b) The brim was in vogue in the 17th century, but we recognize it as the hat of a "princess in distress" when we add the obligatory scarf and change the color from black (married or widowed) to a lighter color.

(c) The Church required Heretics to wear the conical hat, while they were on public display for ridicle and abuse, as a symbol of the horns of the devil he was supposed to worship.

(2) The magic Cape-

(a) More appropriately the domain of the magician, locked away in his tower with his books, the magic cape, with mystical moons, stars, and other astrological symbols sewn or painted on it is supposedly worn by the witch.

(b) This was supposed to make her invisible, and sometimes to give her power to fly.

(c) A more likely explanation is that, back then capes were used much as we use coats for warmth today, and the markings were probably added later just to enhance the effect of strangeness.

(3) The Witches Girdle-

(a) A girdle is simply a belt, used to hold the wallet used at the time. Neither men not women used pockets very much so they both wore girdles or belts which held their pouch-like purses.

(b) The girdle was said to consist of 12 or 13 puffballs, or other decorations, strung together with the magical pouch hanging in their midst.

(c) We now know that 12 is a number representing the 12 signs of the zodiac, and that there are 13 moons in a solar year, so the symbolism is not surprising. Keeping in mind that pickpockets used to be called cutpurses, is it any wonder that an old woman would want to carry her purse hanging in front or near the front of her girdle?

(d) The pouch is supposed to be made of skin and to contain the witchs charms, amulets and herbs. More likely these were old coins or religious medals and herbs made into medicines or cosmetics.

(4) The Gloves

(a) When gloves are mentioned, they are said to be made of catskin, with the fur turned inside.

(b) These were supposed to give her the swiftness and quiet of a cat in the night.

(c) More than likely they kept her arthritic hands warm.

(d) You can still buy gloves with the fur inside in the colder parts of the US.

(5) The Shoes-

(a) Properly called the poulaine, it was the long-toed (phallic) shoe that was very popular in the 15th century.

(b) They were the original 'high heels' or 'platform shoes', but with toes so long that sometimes they had to be tied by a string leading from the toe to just below the wearers knee.

(c) It has been said that playing the game of 'footsie' with the person opposite of you was thought up by someone wearing these shoes. The sexual connotations of the pointed toes is obvious.

B. Physical Appearance

1. Accused witches were as often young and sexually attractive as

they were old and ugly.

a. Whether exceedingly beautiful or horribly ugly, she menaces men in a patriarchal society.

(1) The Church taught men to fear women.

(a) Ecclesiastical writings called woman the 'confusion of man', 'an insatiable beast', 'a continuous anxiety and a daily ruin.'

(2) The infamous Malleus Malleficarum said that witchcraft arose from female carnality.

(a) And 'all wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman.'

b. Few attempts to understand the real causes of the persecution of women have been made but here are a few high-lights found by a male researcher.

(1) Men feel a sense of inferiority in relation to the female archtype of power, which he draws from his infantile experience of total dependence on his mother.

(a) Adult men try to blame women for anything or everything that goes wrong in their lives, as a child might blame his mother for her failure to anticipate his every need.

(2) Few female actions arouse so much male bitterness as what the child typically fears his mother might do: simply walk out, and refuse to return to him.

(a) Medieval religion did not allow men to think of the simple solution of studying how to please their women so they would want to stay close and would enjoy being wives.

(b) Instead, they were taught to think of their women as personal slaves.

(3) The motive of sexual jealousy must be considered a contributing factor in the persecution of women.

(a) Men in an intensely patriarchal society are, in general, very poor lovers, because they are not taught to pay attention to their partners needs or feelings.

(b) Not seeing the connection between their own insensitivity and the dissatisfaction of their women, they assumed that the women preferred demon lovers with huge penises, which only fed their own feelings of inadequacy.

(4) Men's hidden sexual inferiority complexes then fostered misogyne (miso-hate, gyne-women), which was propped up by tales of women preferring to take demon lovers and other, less supernatural but

perhaps more intimidating lovers as rivals to their husbands.

(a) Members of the male hierarchy seldom trusted one another, in view of the fact that almost any woman could be the sexual prey of any man of a higher rank.

(5) Christianity gave men the best of all reasons for hating women when it laid down its doctrine of Eve's responsibility for men having to die.

(a) Ever since the early telling of this doctrine, every man who feared the approach of death was taught to blame women for it.

(b) The limitless ferocity of the clergy toward witches probably stemmed from the fact that they served the Church that claimed to have conquered death, yet they continued to see death all around them, especially in the terrible century of the plague.

(6) Women's sexual magnetism is still experienced by males as a disquieting sort of magic, still poorly under- stood, inflicting a sense of helplessness.

(a) This has probably been so ever since men began to fear women's uncanny ability to force embarrassing responses from male genitals, even across a distance, by words or gestures alone.

(b) Often it was their sexual attractiveness that led women to be denounced in times when such things as erections and wet dreams were reputed to be caused by bewitchments.

(7) Since the pagan ruler of death was usually the Crone in the guise of an old woman, and elder priestesses had occupied the honored positions in pagan temples, old women became the most frequent victims of witch persecutions.

(a) Women after menopause no longer served the purposes of the patrilineal family system, which viewed women as breeding machines and even made 'barrenness' a legal reason for a man to abandon his wife.

(b) The same Church helped codify laws that deprived elder women of the wealth and property they used to control under the rules of mother-right.

(c) Consequently, the old woman was an ideal scapegoat: most times too expendable to be missed, too weak to fight back (though sme did), and too poor to matter.

2. In some sense, the word "Witch" is synonymous in our minds with the word "woman".

a. Perhaps this is because we associate woman's creative powers with the manipulation of vast unseen forces.

b. Or perhaps we intuitively understand that during the long centuries when women were semislaves of society, they were naturally drawn to witchcraft as a cure for their powerlessness, a means of manipulating a world that otherwise painfully manipulated them.

END OF LESSON 6